

OPEN LETTERS.

A suggestion.

Although the "Botanical Society of America" is still only a society "*in spe*", our confrère Dr. Britton has already (June number of the *Torrey Bulletin*) suggested a publication which he thinks the society might issue.

We earnestly hope that the day is not far distant when this society, to which Prof. Bailey gave the first impulse, will be started. The suggestion of Dr. Britton is that its journal be similar to Just's *Botanische Jahresberichte*, with this difference, that it should notice only papers printed in United States.

Is it really true that an American "Just" would be the ideal one? Would it be one most beneficial to botanical study in this country?

We cannot agree with Dr. Britton in this matter and for the following reason. Every botanist who really desires to keep himself "à jour" with our publications has so many opportunities to get the papers themselves, that a reviewing journal seems rather superfluous. The botanical papers of this country appear as a rule in some report, proceedings or in periodicals that are always easily accessible in almost every city. (The index in the *Torrey Bulletin*, however, is always welcome as a guide to what has appeared, and we hope Dr. Britton will not bring this part of the *Bulletin* to a close. The index might be printed in smaller type so as to save space, or the editors might publish it as an appendix to the *Bulletin*.)

It is true, that Just's *Jahresberichte* do not give many reviews of American literature, but this is our own fault. If the American botanists would always send copies of their papers to the editor of the *Jahresberichte*, as well as to all the leading botanical journals in Europe, in which reviews are given, they would then have the satisfaction of seeing their papers reviewed or at least referred to.

If, however, we have something like the *Jahresberichte* in this country, but confined to American literature, what would be gained? A certain class of botanists would content themselves with reading these reviews and would never look at the paper itself. We venture, therefore, to suggest a publication of an entirely different character.

The society should publish a monthly journal containing papers of a strictly scientific character, but which are too long to appear in any of the older journals. When we say "strictly scientific" we mean original researches, based upon thoroughly scientific investigations. Not "a list of plants collected here or there" or "new species of so and so" or purely systematic monographs, but solid contributions to botanical knowledge in the broadest sense, papers on geographical distribution, sketches of vegetation, studies of morphology, anatomy and physiology. These papers should appear in good form, having been first examined and approved by a board of editors, for in this way both writers and readers would be saved from seeing bad blunders and misstatements. This last feature is what we need most of all, to have our manuscripts examined and criticized before the printer puts them into immortality. We believe we would get much more satisfaction out of our work, and we certainly would have to strive a good

deal more than some of us are doing now. Still another thing would be gained. We would have uniformity in our botanical writings, in terminology for instance. This is a matter that is needed badly now, when the Century Dictionary and Crozier's Dictionary of botanical terms have done what they could to spread the worst kind of botany abroad.

The society will have much to do, but we believe there are enough to help, and when once started, it will check the existing evil. C'est le premier pas qui conte.—THEO. HOLM, *Washington, D. C.*

[Mr. Holm would do well to broaden his ideas of "strictly scientific" botany.—EDS.]

NOTES AND NEWS.

BROWN UNIVERSITY bestowed upon Prof. W. W. Bailey the honorary degree of A. M. at the last commencement.

PROF. DR. L. WITTMACK of Berlin, editor of *Gartenflora* and member of the German Botanical Society, will attend the Congress in Madison.

HENRI DE VILMORIN has been appointed to represent the Société Botanique de France at the International Botanical Congress at Madison this month.

THE THIRD EDITION of *Les Maladies de la Vigne* has brought its author, Pierre Viala, well known in America, the Desmazières prize of the French Institute.

COUNT UGOLINO MARTELLI, of Florence, secretary of the Italian Botanical Society, and Prof. Luigi Macchiati of the Royal University of Modena, will be in attendance at the Madison Congress.

CATALPA SPECIOSA has just flowered for the first time in Europe, at Baden Baden, according to Mr. Max Leichtlin in *Gardener's Chronicle*. The trees were sent in 1879 by Professor C. S. Sargent.

ZOE is rapidly increasing the annotations upon our card catalogue of species, each number containing much material of all kinds. We note the name of Professor Douglas H. Campbell among the editors.

IN HIS handbook of the Pteridophytes of South Africa, just published, Mr. T. R. Sim includes 179 species, forty-two of which are peculiar to the cape. All Pteridophytes known to occur south of the tropic of Capricorn are included.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMATIC BOTANY, by Prof. Charles E. Bessey, of the University of Nebraska is announced from the press of Henry Holt & Co. The author proposes to make the work correspond to its title. It is intended for beginners, and the students will be introduced to plants of all the groups.

THE REV. Arthur C. Waghorne, of Newfoundland, has for sale sets of Labrador Sphagna (25) for \$2.00, and sets of Newfoundland and